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(CIA)

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- THE SENATE TODAY VOTED TO CLOSE A LOOPHOLE IN THE CIA CHARTER CITED LAST YEAR TO JUSTIFY THE AGENCY'S HELP TO WATERGATE CONSPIRATORS HOWARD HUNT AND GORDON LIDDY.

AN AMENDMENT BY SEN. WILLIAM PROXMIRE, D-WIS., TO THE 1975 MILITARY BUDGET BILL INSERTED THE WORD "FOREIGN" BEFORE EVERY REFERENCE TO INTELLIGENCE IN THE CIA'S CHARTER. AND DIRECTED THE AGENCY TO REPORT TO CONGRESS ON ALL DUTIES ASSIGNED TO IT BY THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL.

THE AMENDMENT WAS ACCEPTED BY ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN JOHN STENNIS, D-MISS., AFTER PROXMIRE DELETED LANGUAGE THAT WOULD HAVE BARRED THE CIA FROM PROVIDING ANY ASSISTANCE TO POLICE WITHOUT THE WRITTEN APPROVAL OF CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES.

THE FULL SENATE ACCEPTED THE AMENDMENT ON A VOICE VOTE.

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AT STENNIS' REQUEST, PROXMIRE ALSO INSERTED LANGUAGE TO ALLOW THE CIA TO PROTECT ITS OWN INSTALLATIONS AND INVESTIGATE ITS OWN EMPLOYEES IN THE UNITED STATES.

THE NEW PROVISIONS, IF THEY BECOME LAW, WOULD BE THE FIRST REVISIONS OF THE CIA CHARTER SINCE 1949, OFFICIALS SAID.

PROXMIRE TOLD THE SENATE THE CHANGES WERE SUPPORTED BY CIA DIRECTOR WILLIAM COLBY AND WOULD PROVIDE "A STRONG SAFEGUARD AGAINST UNAUTHORIZED USE OF THE CIA."

HE SAID HEARINGS BEFORE THE WATERGATE COMMITTEE AND THE HOUSE AND SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEES HAD SHOWN "A NUMBER OF MISUSES OF CIA AUTHORITY."

AMONG THEM, HE SAID, WERE THE PROVISION OF FALSE CREDENTIALS, DISGUISES, A CAMERA AND OTHER EQUIPMENT TO HUNT AND LIDDY WHO USED THEM DURING THE BREAK-IN AT THE OFFICE OF DANIEL ELLSBERG'S PSYCHIATRIST.

FORMER AGENCY DIRECTOR RICHARD HELMS JUSTIFIED THE AID TO HUNT AS PART OF A NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MISSION ASSIGNED TO CIA.

THE CHARTER CURRENTLY PERMITS THE NSC TO ASSIGN CIA ANY MISSIONS IT THINKS NECESSARY TO PROTECT THE UNITED STATES. UNTIL HELMS TESTIFIED, IT HAD BEEN GENERALLY ASSUMED IN CONGRESS THAT SUCH MISSIONS WOULD BE IN ACCORD WITH AN OVERALL DIRECTION OF THE CHARTER THAT THE CIA SHOULD BE CONCERNED EXCLUSIVELY WITH FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE.

THE AMENDMENT AIMED TO REINFORCE THAT OVERALL ASSIGNMENT BY SPECIFYING THAT THE CIA SHOULD FOCUS EXCLUSIVELY ON OPERATIONS ABROAD.

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